



The Sixty-eighth Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin  
**Concerts**

National Gallery of Art  
2,785th Concert

**Diane Walsh, pianist**

May 2, 2010  
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

## Program

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

*Variations in F Minor*, Hob. XVII:6 (1793)

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

*Sonata in A Minor*, op. 143, D. 784 (1823)

Allegro giusto

Andante

Allegro vivace

## INTERMISSION

François Couperin (1668–1733)

*Passecaille* (from *Huitième Ordre*) (1713)

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

*Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1919)

Prélude

Fugue

Forlane

Rigaudon

Menuet

Toccata

## The Musician

With a reputation as a performer of “romantic sweep and arching lyricism” (*The New York Times*) and “a pianist with superb technique” (*The Boston Globe*), Diane Walsh has created an international career of distinction. In recital, chamber music, and concerto performances, she has brought a clear vision and superlative skill to a broad range of repertoire from Bach to Berg. In addition, her recent work on the theater stage in Moisés Kaufman’s play 33 *Variations* has further illuminated the ingenuity of her musical gifts.

Walsh has given recitals at the 92nd Street Y, Merkin Concert Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Miller Theater in New York City; the Kennedy Center in Washington; and Orchestra Hall in Chicago. Outside the United States, she has appeared at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Dvořák Hall in Prague, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Philharmonic Hall in Leningrad, and Wigmore Hall in London, among many other venues. She has appeared as concerto soloist with the Austin, Delaware, Indianapolis, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Syracuse Symphony orchestras; the American Symphony Orchestra in New York; and the radio symphony orchestras of Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart.

In demand as a chamber musician, Walsh is a member of the Walsh-Drucker-Cooper Trio and La Fenice, an ensemble comprised of piano, string trio, and oboe. She has performed at numerous festivals, among them the Bard, Eastern Shore, Marlboro, and Santa Fe Music Festivals as well as the International Musician’s Seminar in Cornwall, England, and Strings in the Mountains in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. She has served as artistic director of the Skaneateles Festival in upstate New York. A prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, she also won top prizes at the Munich ARD and Salzburg Mozart Competitions and the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

A Steinway artist, Diane Walsh is a member of the piano faculty at Mannes College The New School for Music in New York City. She appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Jonathan Wentworth Associates, Ltd., of Mount Vernon, New York.

## Program Notes

Joseph Haydn wrote his *Variations in F Minor* in 1793 and later retitled it *Un piccolo Divertimento*. His close friend Marianne von Genzinger had died that year, and some scholars have suggested that the work may have been written in her memory. The variations are unusual in that they are double variations with two themes—the first in F minor and the second in F major. Each theme is given two variations, which alternate between minor and major. The contrast of mood between the major and minor variations is more striking than it would be in a sonata movement, since they are presented without transition. It is as if the composer were struggling to conquer sadness and at the same time mourn someone by remembering happier times.

The stark opening of Franz Schubert's *A Minor Sonata*—an unharmonized melody in half notes—seems to create a barren landscape, a terrain also explored in many of his most despairing songs. Although the sonata is compact and less discursive than many of Schubert's piano works, it offers a broad scope of emotion, drama, sharp contrasts, and a wide dynamic range. In the development of the first movement, for example, the whispering theme suddenly opens up into powerful chords in the right hand, accompanied by brilliant octaves in the left hand. The slow movement, which begins modestly and lyrically, also erupts in violent outbursts. The mood throughout the work is mostly tragic, but there are a few moments of consolation. In particular, the last movement's closing theme introduces a lullaby-like melody accompanied by a rocking motion in the bass. The sonata was written in 1823 and published by Anton Diabelli in 1828, with a dedication to Felix Mendelssohn.

Born into an influential family of musicians who dominated the French music world for two centuries, François Couperin — known by his contemporaries as Couperin “le grand,” to distinguish him from other famous musicians from the same family — became a master of music for the harpsichord (*clavecin*) and published twenty-seven keyboard suites, which he called *Ordres*. The *Passeccaille* on this program is from the eighth *Ordre*. Written in the serious key of B minor, it features an eight-bar repeated passacaglia theme and eight heavily-ornamented episodes that seem to comment on the theme. Consistent with the seventeenth-century origins of the genre — variations played between verses of mournful songs — the mood is one of reserved sorrow and dignified grace.

Maurice Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (Memorial to Couperin) is a nostalgic nod to the vanished world of eighteenth-century France and the age of Louis XIV, as well as Ravel’s tribute to the losses incurred by the French population in World War I. The work was written during the early years of the war, and each movement is dedicated to a friend of Ravel who was killed during that conflict. The first performance of the piece was given in 1919 by pianist Marguerite Long, the widow of Captain Joseph de Marliave, to whom the *Toccata* movement is dedicated. Despite its mournful dedications, the suite is elegant and elegiac rather than tragic in mood. When asked about this seeming anomaly, Ravel is said to have replied, “The dead are sad enough, in their eternal silence.”

The *Prelude* is an incessant swirl of right-hand figuration (which became a virtuoso turn for the oboist in Ravel’s later version for orchestra). The *Fugue* is rather bleak in tone; the limping theme is accented to emphasize its syncopations, and baroque techniques such as *stretto* (overlapping theme entrances) and inversion (turning the theme upside down) are also used. The *Forlane* is the emotional highpoint of the suite. The main theme alternates

with contrasting episodes, and the dance rhythm and piquant dissonances create an unusual effect of baroque grace combined with modernity. Except for the final episode in E major, where the mood brightens somewhat, the mood is melancholy and wistful. *Rigaudon* begins and ends rambunctiously, but the contours of the melody in the middle section have an exotic flavor, reminiscent of music played by a snake-charmer. The *Menuet* is also in three-part form. Its gracefulness is accented by some surprising harmonic modulations, including a detour into a distant key before it returns to G major. The final *Toccata* is a tour-de-force for the pianist. The theme is a perpetual motion figure created with rapid repeated notes, played by changing fingers on one note, or by alternating between the two hands. The movement gradually builds to a powerful and brilliant conclusion.

*Program notes by Diane Walsh*

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

**Paul Neubauer, violist**  
**Anne McDermott, pianist**

Music by Alan Paul and Dmitri Shostakovich

May 9, 2010  
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm  
West Building, West Garden Court

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department  
National Gallery of Art  
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC

*Mailing address*  
2000B South Club Drive  
Landover, MD 20785

*[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)*